

*Masdevallia elachys* Luer, sp. nov.

Planta perparva epiphytica caespitosa, caulibus secundariis brevissimis unifoliatis, folio coriaceo anguste obovato petiolato pedunculo duplo longiore, sepalis albis basi brunneo suffusis in tubo cylindrico connatis intus pubescentibus caudis luteis gracilibus, petalis oblongis truncatis basi cum dente retrorso, labello oblongoligulato apice minute eroso.

Plant very small, epiphytic, caespitose; roots fine, flexuous. Secondary stems slender, terete, 8-15 mm long, enclosed by 2 thin, loose, tubular sheaths. Leaf erect, coriaceous, long-petiolate, narrowly elliptical-obovate, 3-7 cm long including the 1.5-4 cm long petiole, 7-11 mm wide, the subacute apex tridenticulate, narrowly cuneate below into the slender petiole. Inflorescence a solitary flower borne by an erect, slender peduncle ca. 2 cm long, with a basal bract, from a node low on the secondary stem, floral bract tubular, 5-6 mm long; pedicel 5-6 mm long; ovary yellowish white, 3 mm long; sepals white, suffused with light brown toward the bases, glabrous without, shortly pubescent within above the middle, with a few red dots below the middle, the dorsal sepal narrowly obovate 14 mm long, 4.5 mm wide, connate to the lateral sepals for 9 mm into a cylindrical sepaline tube, the free portion triangular, the acute apex contracted into a slender, yellow tail 13 mm long, the lateral sepals connate 8 mm into a bifid, oblong synsepal, with a mentum below the column-foot, the blade, the triangular free portions and tails similar to those of the dorsal sepal; petals white, oblong, 4 mm long, 1.5 mm wide, the truncate apex minutely tri-lobed, with a callus on the lower margin below the middle produced into a thick, blunt, retrorse tooth; lip light yellow, speckled with red-purple, oblong-ligulate, 4.25 mm long, 2 mm wide, the apex obtusely short-acuminate, minutely erose, the disc shallowly sulcate centrally between a low pair of longitudinal calli, the base subcordate, hinged beneath; column red, stout, semiterete, 3 mm long, the foot equally long with a curved extension.

ETYMOLOGY: From the Greek *elachys* (ἐλάχισ), "small, short, or low," in reference to the stature of the plant.

TYPE: *BOLIVIA*: SANTA CRUZ: collected by Helen Kuhn s.n., near Sibiria, Aug. 1976, cultivated by J & L Orchids at Easton, Ct., flowered in cult. 20 Apr. 1978, *C. Luer 2893* (HOLOTYPE: SEL).

DISTRIBUTION: Bolivia.

This small, unobtrusive species of *Masdevallia* was collected inadvertently with plants of *M. paivaeana* Rchb. f. Nearly two years later strange flowers began to appear among the leaves of potted plants of the latter. Examination revealed the stowaway to be a much smaller plant growing closely entwined among the roots. *Masdevallia elachys* may be distinguished by the small, long-petiolate leaves and a short peduncle bearing a small whitish, tubular flower slightly suffused with brown, with filiform tails spreading from the shortly pubescent interior. The petals are provided with a basal tooth, the ligulate lip is yellow, marked with red-purple, and the column is red.